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MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS.

EIGHTEENTH SESSION.

The Eighteenth Scientific Session of the Academy was held in Philadelphia on Thursday, February 23, at the New Century Club, at 8 p. m.

The Secretary announced that the following papers had been submitted to the Academy since the last meeting :

146. By Judge JOHN BROOMALL, Media, Pa.: Compulsory Voting. Printed in the ANNALS, March, 1893.
147. By Professor J. B. CLARK, of Smith College: Surplus Gains of Labor. Printed in the ANNALS, March, 1893.
148. By Hon. J. H. WALKER, Worcester, Mass.: Banking System—Old and New. Printed in the ANNALS, March, 1893.
149. By GAMALIEL BRADFORD, Esq., Boston, Mass.: Our Failures in Municipal Government. Printed in the ANNALS, May, 1893.
150. By FREDERICK H. COOKE, New York City: Province of Sociology.
151. By MAURICE BLOCK, Member of the Institute of France, Paris: Le Mouvement des idées économiques en France. Printed in the current number of the ANNALS.
152. By Professor ALFRED MARSHALL, of Cambridge: Consumers' Surplus. Printed in the ANNALS, March, 1893.
153. By G. H. BATCHELOR, Indianapolis: Progressive Taxation.
154. By President ISAAC SHARPLESS, of Haverford College: Relation of the State to Education in England and America. Printed in the ANNALS, May, 1893.

President Isaac Sharpless then read a paper on "The Relation of the State to Education in England and America" (No. 154), which was discussed by several of the members present.

NINETEENTH SESSION.

The Nineteenth Scientific Session of the Academy was held in Philadelphia on Thursday, April 27, at the Art Club, at 8 p. m.

The Secretary announced that the following papers had been submitted to the Academy :

155. By GEO. K. HOLMES, Washington : *The Peons of the South.*
156. By Professor LESTER F. WARD, Washington : *Political Ethics of Herbert Spencer.*
157. By Professor JAMES MAVOR, of the University of Toronto : *The Relation of Economic Study to Public and Private Morality.* Printed in the current number of the *ANNALS.*
158. By R. T. COLBURN, Elizabeth, N. J. : *Taxation of Large Estates.* Printed in the current number of the *ANNALS.*
159. By WM. F. HARDING, Bloomington, Ills. : *A Successful School Savings Bank.*
160. By JOHN A. HOBSON, London : *Objective and Subjective View of Distribution.*
161. By Hon. CARROLL D. WRIGHT, Washington : *Relation of Economic Conditions to the Causes of Crime.* Printed in the *ANNALS*, May, 1893.
162. By Professor JOHN J. MCCOOK, of Trinity College : *The Tramp.*
163. By Professor S. M. MACVANE, of Harvard University : *The Austrian Theory of Value.*
164. By Professor JOHN R. COMMONS, of Indiana University : *Bullion Notes and an Elastic Currency.*

The President then introduced Professor Lester F. Ward, who read a paper on "The Political Ethics of Herbert Spencer" (No. 156).

The speaker criticised the rank which Mr. Spencer gives to ethics in his scheme of philosophy. "He has made it," he said, "the great end of all his labors, while from the very character of his 'ethics,' the doctrine that happiness is the end of action, and the argument that this will ultimately be attained through altruistic action becoming that which yields the greatest happiness—the most egoistic—it is evident that 'ethics' relates to a theoretically transient state of society, which is to pass away as soon as altruistic and egoistic actions shall have become mutually adjusted. 'Ethics,' therefore, during this transition period, is merely a department of sociology, and only entitled to a subordinate place in the sociological scheme.

“The fundamental principle which seems to underlie every statement of Mr. Spencer’s works is that of self-adjustment. To his mind the arch offender against the laws of nature is Government. He can see no bond of mutuality between the government and the citizen. With him the former is an outside power, working against the latter and for itself alone.”

After having taken up various opinions set forth in Mr. Spencer’s works, Professor Ward observed that, in comparing his later with his earlier writings, there was evidently a gradual dying out of his warmer and more sympathetic impulses, which, at the beginning of his career, made him the friend of all who suffered from the effects of an imperfect social state.

“It is simply astonishing,” said the speaker, “that the great exponent of the law of evolution in all other departments should so signally fail to grasp that law in this highest department. The extreme *noli tangere* individualism with which the entire social philosophy of Herbert Spencer is permeated must, in spite of all disclaimers, impart to it the character of a gospel of nihilism.”

An interesting discussion followed the reading of the paper.

Mr. Emory R. Johnson spoke in substance, as follows: Herbert Spencer is a striking illustration of two facts. He shows how a man eminent in one branch of science may go quite astray in another field of thought; by carrying the laws valid among those kinds of investigation with which, as a biologist, he is most familiar, into social science he is led into error. But Spencer is also a man who does not shrink from the conclusions to which his premises lead him. Starting out with certain abstract principles of justice he is led to look upon state interference as pernicious. He is an ultra-individualist. But the facts of society run counter to his theories. As Professor Ward has said, he has neglected the integration of functions that accompanies the development

of the organism, biological or social. With the progress of society into higher political, economic and intellectual life, integration takes place. What economists call the law of social solidarity comes to have wider application. To the extent that the economic activities of the different producing classes become more and more inter-dependent, to that degree is the need for guidance, for increased functions of government, necessary. The movement of society in the future is going to be in the direction of larger, not narrower, state activity.

Professor E. D. Cope expressed himself as in harmony with the general position of Dr. Ward, both in its agreement and disagreement with what Mr. Spencer has written on the subject of evolution. He said that Mr. Spencer's position in the matter of the relation of organic evolution to psychic evolution reminded him somewhat of Agassiz's attitude toward the doctrine of evolution in general. Spencer had enunciated the true principles of the Neolamarkian form of the evolutionary hypothesis in his chapter on animal motion and in his speculation as to the influence of motion in producing the segmentation of the vertebral column. He had also enunciated the true theory of psychic evolution. But he had failed to see the nature of the connection between the evolutions. He had misapprehended the relation of the two consciousness of animals to their evolution, and had misrepresented the nature of consciousness in his laborious effort to derive it from mechanical energy as an equivalent. He said that Spencer gave too wide an application to the process of the "integration of matter and the dissipation of energy." While this law is true of inorganic processes when not controlled by man, and also of physiological functioning of the animal organism, it is not true in ontogenetic and evolutionary processes. Here the essential process is the reverse of what it is in inorganic nature, being a process of the conservation of a highly complex colloid, protoplasm, and the building out of it of machines for the development

of ever higher forms of energy, viz., those that are necessary to consciousness, intelligence, and other mental phenomena. The speaker had pointed out, as early as 1871,* the essential importance of simple psychic states (forms of consciousness) in organic evolution. The creation of man, as he is at present constituted, was not then two independent processes, one material and the other psychic, but a continuous process, the psychic directing and finally surmounting the material.

While Spencer points out the verity of the hypothesis of the utilitarian evolution of ethics, he abandons the field to material forces to too great an extent when he considers the evolution of society. The highest object attainable is the evolution of ethical minds in perfect bodies, but in any case, of ethical minds. Spencer is right in denouncing the artificial preservation of the unfit, but his definition of the unfit is too wide. On the other hand the speaker had no sympathy with those writers who declare that man is free from the ordinary evolutionary influences that prevail in lower animals. It could not be denied that the struggle for existence goes on among men, with the effect on the whole, of the survival of the fittest. In the struggle between the physically weak the former have the better chance of survival. In the struggle between the intelligent and the unintelligent, the intelligent have the better chance. Finally, the whole evolution of society is one calculated to conserve the ethically fit as against the ethically unfit, and it is accomplished by the interaction on each other of psychic beings.

The next speaker was Rev. René Isidore Holaind, who said: The strictures of Professor Ward seem to me perfectly justified. Mr. Spencer has almost ignored the play of psychical forces, or rather, the specific differences between psychical and physiological energies. As a consequence, he takes evolution in conduct and physiological evolution to be completely alike. Mr. Spencer says in his "Data of

* Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society.

Ethics" that ethics has a physical aspect, since it treats of human activities which, in common with all expenditures of energy, conform to the law of persistence of energy: moral principles must conform to physical necessities. He fails to see that a physical law and a moral law are different in kind: the former expressing the natural sequence of necessary phenomena; the latter denoting the play of free and self-governing agencies. Hence he is driven to deny freewill, and to make this denial the crucial test of his psychology, and consequently of his ethics. In his "Principles of Psychology" he asserts that psychical changes either conform to law or they do not. If they do not conform to law, this work in common with all works on the subject is sheer nonsense; no science of psychology is possible. If they do conform to law, there cannot be any such thing as freewill. Freedom of the will would be at variance with the beneficent necessity displayed in the evolution of the correspondence between the organism and the environment. After such an emphatic denial of freewill, one is amazed to read an essay of Mr. Spencer on *The Sins of Legislators*. How can legislators commit sins, when they are driven by a beneficent but inexorable necessity? To overcome such a necessity, legislators would have to perform miracles, and Mr. Spencer does not believe in miracles. Professor Ward truly said that such ethics might befit lower animals, but that it must prove inadequate when applied to man.

But if Mr. Spencer is wrong in mistaking the true character of psychical agencies, he has nevertheless laid us under obligation by protesting eloquently against a blind worship of Hobbes' "Leviathan." There is throughout the world a perceptible tendency to centralize every power, at the expense of individual liberty. This tendency must be opposed, not by force, but by reason. Two conditions are essential for the well-being of a body politic, as well as for the health of a body physiological. Each part, each organ, must be allowed freely to perform its own special duties, and

all their several functions must be harmonized and combined for the building up and preservation of the whole. Differentiation and integration must go hand in hand. Doubtless, the more complex the organism, the stronger the central power must be. As political bodies are growing in size and complexity, interdependence and direction become more imperative ; but you cannot impair the activity of the parts without sapping the vitality of the whole. To combine the greatest amount of individual freedom with the greatest efficiency of corporate action is perhaps the most difficult problem of modern sociology. Yet this problem is not insoluble, and the following rules may be proposed as a way to approach the solution : *Whenever the direct and specific purpose of an action or of a course of action is the welfare of the individual, let liberty remain untrammelled. Whenever the end to be attained is distinctly corporate and national, let the direction of the central power be effective and supreme.* These principles of social science are often difficult of application, but where legislators and rulers bear in mind the doctrine which they embody, and make it a standard of political conduct, there the State is strong and the citizens are free.

*Rev. Father Holaind was followed by Dr. James W. Walk, who spoke as follows :

Whether, upon the whole, the recent utterances of Herbert Spencer, in regard to the functions of the State, are inconsistent with his early teachings upon the same subject, is a question which may lead to prolonged debate. Doubtless much can be said upon both sides ; but even if all the inconsistencies charged be admitted, Mr. Spencer deserves our gratitude for the bold stand he has taken in favor of individual liberty, at a time when the functions of government bid fair to be enlarged to such an extent as to include almost all the activities of society.

He has spoken in clarion tones a much needed word of warning. There is to-day a real and serious danger in civil

government meddling with too many things. The experience of the Middle Ages taught men to dread the interference of the State to so great a degree, that it was a common-place of the civic writers of the early part of this century "that the best government, was the one that governed least." Doubtless that was an extreme view ; but surely the pendulum has now swung too far in the opposite direction. To-day, we are told that the government should control the telegraphs, the railroads, the tramways, the gas works, the water works, indeed almost every enterprise requiring association or organized activity ; and yet there are some grave objections to the extension of governmental functions, which must be apparent to any one who will glance at near and obvious facts.

We all know that a sort of paralysis seems to attack industries when they come under State control. Take, for instance, the storage and distribution of water, and the manufacture of gas. It would be difficult to mention a single improvement in these industries, which has been inaugurated where they are controlled by political bodies. As such industries have passed from the hands of individuals and corporations into the hands of the State, their administration has fallen into an indolent routine, at once unprogressive and extravagant.

I do not deny that certain industries are natural monopolies, and that natural monopolies may, with advantage, be owned by the State ; but there are dangers in such ownership, and one of the greatest of these is the increased expense of management. We have not yet seriously felt the burden of this, because the enormous energy manifested by private enterprises, has enabled us to collect large revenues from the profits of corporate activity.

When, however, most of the work now done by corporations shall be transferred to the State, the fountains of taxation will have been drained and the falling off in revenue will be painfully felt.

The change among thinking men from a well marked dread of State interference to an almost extravagant desire for the enlargement of the functions of government is, in my opinion, due to changed material conditions. The advance in the physical sciences has been so rapid that we have not yet been able to adapt ourselves to the new conditions imposed upon society, and until this adjustment takes place there will necessarily be much confusion.

Just here I wish to call attention to an analogy, which seems to me a very interesting one. It is that which exists between the present condition of society, in civilized countries, and the condition of childhood of the individual. The child exists among surroundings with which he is unfamiliar, he is ignorant of his environment and, in consequence, he must have the guidance and restraint of parental government during the period of infancy. Lovers of liberty have been accustomed to consider the charge of *paternalism* as the worst reproach which could be applied to government intended for mature men ; but all acknowledge the necessity of a paternal government for children.

Now, in the midst of the changed conditions of modern industry, we are all, for the moment, in the position of the child, unfamiliar, with his surroundings, and it is necessary to resort to some sort of paternalism until we become adapted to our environment, hence there is a demand that the State should assume paternal functions. Questioning, as I do, for *a priori* reasons and upon general principles, the enlargement of the functions of the State, I admit that, at present, this enlargement may be necessary ; but I earnestly hope that it may be only temporary. I trust that when society has adapted itself to the new conditions of industry, produced by the extraordinary progress of the physical sciences, we will not need the parental care of the State any more than the mature man needs the parental government of his father.

The problems, with which we are confronted at present, have their most formidable expression in the controversy

between capital and labor. This controversy grows more serious and no one knows how to deal with it. After all, State interference, in this field, can be but a temporary remedy for the existing evil. Their cure must be sought in the application of ethical principles, in the practice of doing by others as we would have them do by us. Until this principle is practically recognized in society we may be compelled to rely upon the strong arm of civil government to curb alternately the savage selfishness of rich and poor alike ; but the protection will be dearly purchased.

Perhaps the view I take is optimistic ; but I sincerely believe that the day will come when it will be recognized that the new industrial conditions are consistent with a measure of individual liberty, not less, but larger than we now enjoy, and when, by the recognition of a higher morality among all classes, rich and poor, the social problems, now so threatening, will be solved by reason and mutual concession, without invoking the clumsy interference of the State.

When that day comes—when order is founded on liberty, and the largest liberty is felt to be consistent with the most perfect order—the civilized nations will make rapid progress toward the ideal republic ; a society as far removed, on the one hand, from the spiritless paternalism of the socialistic State as it is, on the other, from the anarchy of uncurbed individualism.

The next speaker was Professor C. Hanford Henderson, who said :

The present criticism of Herbert Spencer appears to be an impeachment of his political views on the double charge that they are too theoretical, and that they are founded upon biology rather than psychology. Both of these charges, it seems to me, may be successfully refuted.

In the first place, it is to be remarked that no branch of science can possibly be too theoretical, provided its fundamental theories be true. To charge a science with being too theoretical, is the same as complaining that it is too

scientific, and this is a contradiction in terms. If politics is to be regarded as a science, and there is certainly a tendency among modern students to so regard it, it must present a consistent body of well co-ordinated truth, rather than a loose collection of contemporary expedients. When Mr. Spencer is charged with being too theoretical, the implication is generally that his system is too well co-ordinated, and too rigid to allow a sufficiently free play for the cherished expedients of our so-called practical politics. In this sense, he is certainly too theoretical, but we should be disposed to regard the quality as a virtue and not as a fault. If his system is to be overthrown, it must be overthrown, not by the charge that it is too systematic and too coherent, but by showing either that it is not coherent enough, or that it starts out upon false premises.

The proper point of attack is at Spencer's premises. If these can be shown to be false, his whole system falls to the ground and no further inquiry is needed. What, then, is their source? Spencer has answered this question for us in the opening chapters of his volume on "Justice." He does not ask with Pilate, "What is truth?" and then proceed to build up a political system upon his own answer to the question. He turns rather to human experience for the answer. His method of dealing with this vast body of material is disclosed in the early chapters of *First Principles*. It is the strict method of science.

Every branch of human knowledge which has progressed far enough to deserve the name of science has passed through two stages of development. In the first, we have induction, a passage from the extension of a multitude of observations to the intention of a few great truths. In the second stage, we have deduction, the unfolding of these fundamental truths into a whole fabric of necessary conclusions. It is this process which has given to science its wonderful powers of prediction, powers which, according to Comte, constitute the very test of science. In its early stage,

science must be experimental. The great body of observed facts must be gathered and co-ordinated, before the common element running through all of them can be detected, and published as a general truth. And observe, if you please, that this general truth does not in any way transcend experience; it is in no sense an absolute, that is, an unverifiable truth. On the contrary, it is a product of the strictest induction, a result made necessary by experience. It is true that we transcend experience when we apply this induction, for the result which we announce has never been actually experienced. But in a broader sense, we keep well within the bounds of strict experience, since our result has been all the while immanent in preceding experience.

Astronomy, as represented in human heads, does not note every position of a comet. That would be as unnecessary as it would be impossible. A comparatively few observations furnish the elements of the orbit. This done, and the comet's position, when it passes out of sight, is announced with as much certainty as when it could be seen with the naked eye. And though the statement transcends experience, its probability is never called in question.

Now, Spencer's heresy has consisted in applying this method of science to the domain of politics. He may not have done the work perfectly—indeed, as a pioneer, it is almost impossible that he should have done the work perfectly—he may have used the same word in more than one sense, in his metaphysical discussions, and he may have done several other things to which exception could properly be taken, but the fact remains that he has chosen a true method in dealing with politics, and that no critic has yet been able to show that he has in the main applied the method falsely.

Evolved through such a method, the political system of Spencer is no more absolute than are the sciences of physics and chemistry and astronomy. Like them, it rests upon inductions drawn from a large body of experience—the political history of mankind. It does not rest, as would be inferred

from much of current criticism, upon *a priori* assumptions falling out of the empyrean. The great induction, growing out of his minor inductions, Spencer sums up in his Formula of Justice: "Every man is free to do that which he wills, provided he infringes not the equal freedom of any other man." And this, we take to be the fundamental doctrine of his political system, the "Conservation of Justice," as the doctrines of the Conservation of Matter and Motion are fundamental to the sciences of chemistry and physics.

This formula has never been successfully controverted. A truth expressed in such very general terms is not readily open to attack. This point reached, the inductive process ends.

The second stage in the scientific method, the deductive process, now begins, and is absolute in the same sense as the deductions of logic and geometry are absolute. There is no play for personal opinion. Judged by the formula of justice, every governmental measure is right or wrong, and affords no room for discussion. It is not a stage of development which offers much encouragement to the activities of the professional politician. If Spencer's formula expresses the essence of justice, and if it be the province of government to administer justice, then it is very clear that no measure is justifiable which confers benefits upon the many at the expense of the few, or benefits upon the few at the expense of the many; that no measure is justifiable which imposes equal burdens and returns unequal benefits; or which imposes unequal burdens and yields equal returns; that no measure is justifiable which "protects" a part of our industries in different degree and the rest not at all; that says where we shall buy and sell, how long we shall work, where and when we shall go to school; that no measure is justifiable which attempts an ominous sort of justice, under cover of the "greatest happiness" or any other principle; or excuses a great injustice to a few individuals by urging the benefits conferred upon a mass. In a

word, the Spencerian formula prohibits most of our present governmental functions. It repudiates paternalism. It denies the validity of State Socialism. It proclaims the pre-eminence of voluntary, individual action, as opposed to enforced associated action. Above all, it never reasons backward from either experienced or supposed results, as shown by special cases. It always reasons forward from well established general truths. The political views founded upon this formula are consequently the very opposite of those which expediency sanctions, and between these two views there must be war to the death. Even Spencer himself could find no reconciliation. The further development of Spencerian politics will, we trust, show a body of doctrine increasingly theoretical, for it is only by such a growth that they can become increasingly consistent and increasingly binding.

Whether the biological basis of Spencerian politics be held as a virtue or a defect will depend upon one's training. Certainly no one who is in the current of modern scientific thought will for a moment hold biology and psychology to be antithetical. There was a system of psychology which spun a cobweb tissue quite independent of man's organism, but it was not a system which very well withstood the test of modern experimental methods. The psychology of to-day is little more than a modest suggestion, but the one thing that it does urge with certitude is its inseparableness from biology, and the one view that it does proclaim from the house-tops is the essential unity of man's nature. To turn from such a biological basis, which is in effect the basis of experimental psychology, to a basis found in the psychology of the schoolmen would emphatically be a jump from solid ground into airy dreams, for it would be the substitution of *a priori* assumptions of very doubtful character for strict inductions drawn from human experience.

In thus attempting to briefly defend Spencerian politics from what I conceive to be an unwarranted charge, I do not

wish, even by implication, to express a belief in their infallibility. On the contrary, one may easily detect faults. The chapter on Women, for example, in the volume on Justice, is a notable misapplication of the Formula. And one may find inaccuracies in Spencer, as in the majority of inspired and uninspired writers. But what I do contend is that these defects are minor defects, and that they are not the defects of being either too theoretical or too biological.

Even had Spencer developed a political system much less perfect than he has, he would still deserve a cordial welcome at our hands, for his method, let me repeat, is a true method. It is the strict method of science. It builds a system, not upon *a priori* assumptions, not upon results which presumably would follow certain and special actions, but upon observed results which have actually been experienced throughout the course of human history. The main difference between Spencer and the exponents of current expediency politics appears to me to be this: that while Spencer draws his conclusions from experience which is at once universal and actual, they prefer the study of events near at hand, which are local in their character, and often purely hypothetical as well. On the doctrine of probabilities, the Spencerian method may be expected to yield the more reliable results. It would seem, then, to be the part of wisdom not to reject this method and the system founded upon it, but to unfold, and correct, and perfect them.

After the discussion was finished, Professor Ward made a few remarks in reply and the meeting adjourned.